

Racing Commission

The core mission of the New Jersey Racing Commission is to govern, direct and regulate horse racing and pari-mutuel wagering in New Jersey.

The Racing Commission conducts vigorous oversight of horse racing matters throughout the State to ensure that racing is conducted in a fair and responsible manner. Commission staff members also provide administrative support to encourage the growth of the horse racing industry through expansion of wagering opportunities. For more information, visit the Racing Commission Web site www.nj.gov/oag/racing.

Highlights

❖ **Arrest/Suspension of Two for "Doping" Horses** —

In 2004, two men were indicted in connection with an ongoing investigation into the doping or "drenching" of race horses at the Freehold Raceway. The doping investigation was a cooperative effort involving State Police and the Division of Criminal Justice. Defendant Daniel Sheddin, a self-employed horse trainer, was charged with the third-degree crime of possessing a controlled dangerous substance, and the fourth-degree offenses of conspiracy and rigging a publicly exhibited contest. Defendant Bruce Chiodo, a horse groom, was charged with conspiracy and rigging a publicly exhibited contest.

"Drenching" is a racing industry term that refers to the administering of a liquid or prohibited substance into a horse's stomach via a tube inserted through the nose. In this case, the substance was a "milkshake" of sodium bicarbonate and Levothyroxine, a prescription drug commonly used to enhance physical performance. Both substances are barred under Racing Commission rules. The investigation, which led to the discovery of substances used in doping and paraphernalia in a barn in Burlington County, led to the removal or "scratching" of three horses slated to run in separate races at Freehold Raceway on Feb. 21, 2004. Notwithstanding any potential criminal penalties, the Racing Commission suspended Sheddin from the industry for seven years, and suspended Chiodo for six years. Sheddin also was fined \$2,000 by the Commission, and Chiodo was fined \$1,000. The Racing Commission

and state law enforcement agencies continue to be aggressive in their effort to identify possible doping, to investigate and, where appropriate, take swift action.

❖ **Account Wagering Becomes Operational** —

Account wagering — a new form of betting that will expand New Jersey's wagering base by offering the convenience of placing bets on horse races by telephone or computer — became reality in 2004. The long-awaited new system became operational on October 27, 2004, when the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority accepted the first computer-generated bets. The last time there was an expansion of wagering opportunities in New Jersey was more than a decade ago, in 1993, when the State began permitting the placement of bets on horse racing simulcasts at the casinos in Atlantic City. Legislation passed in 2001 provided that the New Jersey Racing Commission review and approve an account wagering participation agreement, and a subsequent application to conduct account wagering via computer and telephone. The process required substantial input from the Attorney General's staff and the Racing Commission.

❖ **Off-Track Wagering Agreement** —

An off-track wagering participation agreement was reached in 2004 that provides the basis for establishment of up to 15 off-track wagering facilities throughout New Jersey. The Racing Commission expects to begin reviewing the first applica-

tions for development of off-track betting sites sometime in 2005.

❖ **Gambling Addiction Prevention** —

Mindful that the expansion of wagering opportunities could lead to heightened concerns about gambling addiction, the Racing Commission is requiring — through its rulemaking process — that racetrack permit-holders contribute an aggregate of \$200,000 annually to the fund established to treat gambling addiction. In addition, the Commission has adopted rules that establish a self-exclusion list. A self-exclusion list provides an opportunity for problem gamblers to voluntarily exclude themselves from entry to racetracks, from account wagering and, eventually, from off-track wagering facilities.

❖ **Expansion of Thoroughbred Breeders Award Program** —

In 2004, the Racing Commission adopted a rule that expands the Thoroughbred Breeders Award Program to enable horses sired by New Jersey stallions, regardless of where they are foaled, to be eligible for New Jersey breeder's awards. The change should attract more quality thoroughbred stallions to stand in New Jersey, and thus improve the quality of New Jersey-bred horses.



From left to right: Anthony Socci, Assistant Director; Frank Zanzucchi, Director; Michael Vukcevic, Deputy Director.

